THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (PROF. YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) The main schemes of the Department of Electronics to promote development of latest technologies in the field of electronics are Technology Development Council (TDC) Programme, national Radar Council (NRC) Programme, Microelectronics Development Programme, Photonics Development Programme, System Engineering & Consultancy (SECO) and Automotive Electronics Programme, Electronics Materials Development Programme, Industrial Electronics Promotion Programme, National High Voltage Direct Current (NHVDC) project, Advanced Technology Programme in Computer Networking (ERNET), Fifth Generation Computer System Development Programme, Electronics in Health Programme, Rural Electronics Programme and Technology Missions.

(b) The budget estimates for these schemes is Rs. 59.73 crores during 1996-97.

(c) On the whole, India's capabilities in this regard as compared to other developing Asian countries are very favourable.

Population egg consumption in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa

570. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the efforts made to popularise benefits of eggs consumption in rural areas, especially in the North Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, to find market for the excess production;

(b) whether "Eggs on Wheels" programme proposed by the Vizag zone of National Egg Co-ordination Committeee would be assisted in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI DILIP KUMAR RAY): (a) to (d) The Ministry of Food Processing Industries, under one of its Plan schemes extends financial assistance for the development of poultry and egg processing. Financial assistance under this scheme has been extended, inter-alia, to Andhra Pradesh Industrial Development Corporation Limited.

While the Ministry do not have any specific Plan scheme in this regard, the National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC) has been attempting to popularise the benefits of the egg consumption in the country through various mass communication media. The "Eggs on Wheels" programme proposed by the Vizag Zone of NECC would also be assisted by NECC.

Setting up of food processing Industries in Punjab

571. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any policy for setting up of food processing Industries in the backward districts and border areas of Punjab;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken by Government to implement the policy; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI DILIP KUMAR RAY): (a) to (c) Government have been taking various policy measures for the development of food processing in the whole country including backward areas. However, these measures are not State

specific. The measures include delicensing of most of the food processing (except brewing and distillation of alcoholic beverages and those items reserved for small scale industries) and provision of fiscal incentives. The Ministry also operates development Plan Schemes under which financial assistance is provided for the development of food processing industries to State Government Organisations/Joint Sector/ Assisted Sector/Voluntary Organisations/ Cooperatives etc.

As per the existing policy, beer units can be set only in centrally declared category A or B backward areas.

As per available information, the State Government of Punjab, in its new Industrial Policy, recognises agro-based industries as a thrust area and provides special package of incensitives. The whole State, including backward districts and border areas of Punjab, is eligible for such investment incentives, sales tax exemption/deferment and generator set subsidy etc. subject to certain conditions.

Scheme for fruit and vegetable processing sector in Maharashtra

572. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are implementing any scheme for strengthening backward linkages between the farmers and the processors in the fruit and vegetable processing sector in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the State Government is also playing any role in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) what are the other measures being taken by Government to promote fruit and vegetable processing sector in Maharashtra?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI DILIP KUMAR RAY): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Food Processing Industries is implementing a Plan scheme for strengthening of backward linkages which seeks to provide assistance in the form of re-imbursement to the extent of 5% of total purchases of raw fruits and vegetables made by the processor in a given year, Limited to Rs. 10 lakhs.

The processing company seeking such assistance would be required to supply high quality seeds, fertilisers, pesticides and technology, and also do other extension work for the contracted farmers/growers, who shall not be less than 25 in number.

The processing company/unit, which may be in private sector, assisted sector, joint sector, cooperative sector or a NGO, can avail such assistance for a maximum period of 3 years.

This scheme is being implemented all over the country including the State of Maharashtra.

(c) and (d) State Governments have designated nodal agencies for the development of food processing industries in their respective states. These agencies, inter-alia, monitor the schemes for strengthening of backward linkages.

(e) The Ministry of Food Processing Industries is implementing various development plan schemes which provide assistance for setting up of fruit & vegetable based industries, including their expansion and upgradation, in various States including Maharashtra. However, none of these developmental plan schemes in state specific.

Invention of a Solar Energy Device by An "Indo-Canadian Engineer"

573. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item appeared in "The Hindustan Times" dated 22nd December, 1996 to the effect